

Characters

- IPHIGENIA, a spinning girl of privileged means, slightly feral, she's used to being in the public eye, she's breaking down
- ACHILLES, a rock star, damaged and torn (on video and live); Also (may) play FRESA GIRL 3, chorus.¹
- ADOLFO, Iphigenia's father, a contained and ambitious general (on video and live); Also plays VIRTUAL MC, an obscene, liquid, techno-trip-hop vision (on video); GENERAL'S ASS, a mask from the satyr play, part commedia role, part Burroughs-like dream; SOLDIER X, a mercenary, who has no passion left; And FRESA GIRL 1, chorus.
- CAMILA, Iphigenia's mother, a narcotized prop possessed of a fierce hauteur (on video and live); Also plays VIOLETA IMPERIAL, an ageless apparition, a messenger and prophet, earth-bound; And HERMAPHRODITE PRINCE, a mask from the satyr play, a little lost and seriously messed up;
- ORESTES, Iphigenia's baby brother, an addicted, spewing child with an adult voice (on video and live); Also plays NEWS ANCHOR, a plastic icon on the TV (on video and live); VIRGIN PUTA, a mask from the satyr play, who is Iphigenia's other twin. GLASS-EYED MAN (on video), a specter; And FRESA GIRL 2, chorus.

Time:

The present. An unnamed country in the Americas during a time of unrest.

Setting:

The frame of an aircraft hangar.

Dust, dirt, and a stained party dress nailed to a battered wall. Oddly dyed carnations on the ground.

The wall is jagged and impossibly high. A bank of surveillance cameras to one side: the silent, red eye.

Note:

There are Spanish words and phrases incorporated in the text, which are either translated directly by a character or can be determined from context. No "Hispanic" accents should be used.

1 All chorus roles are to be played by men. If Achilles is not doubled, then Fresa Girl 3 should be played by an additional actor.

Prologue

[In the distance is heard the chorus to Christoph Gluck's opera "Iphigenia in Aulis" (1774). In the background, an image is projected on screen: IPHIGENIA, in a pink Chanel dress with white gloves, sits next to ADOLFO in a military coat.

In the foreground, live, ADOLFO and CAMILA sit ready for a press photograph. IPHIGENIA is at their side. She wears a double of the pink Chanel dress in the video image.]

ADOLFO

There was a young woman who lived in a small house by the sea, and the man who loved her.

[In the foreground, live, ADOLFO kisses IPHIGENIA on the lips.]

In the background, image on the screen: slowly, the woman's suit begins to peel off her body and her skin begins to burn, while the man continues sitting, his body warm inside his coat.]

He loved her so much that he would do anything for her.

[In the foreground, live, ADOLFO kisses IPHIGENIA on the lips again.]

This man was her father. He was a general. He had lived with fame at his side all his life. He envied others. He even envied his daughter from time to time.

[In the background, image on the screen: A GLASS-EYED MAN with a cane in hand, a cane with a snake's head as its scepter, looks at ADOLFO and the IPHIGENIA in flames.]

The father could tell his daughter was not happy living in the small house which held her day and night. He could see that the low ceiling hurt her head, And her feet couldn't move without touching the edge of the front door. He liked looking at her. He liked having her in the house for safe-keeping. But he would catch her looking out. Out the window of the small house, and the garden, out toward the sea.

[In the foreground, live, IPHIGENIA looks out, away from her father, who holds her by the hand.]

"Dear, sweet Iphigenia," the father would think.

[Title card on screen: "How much for her flesh?"]

[Image on screen: The GLASS-EYED MAN looks at the burning woman who was once IPHIGENIA, and at the warm man who is ADOLFO. The GLASS-EYED MAN's stare fills the screen.]

In the foreground, live, IPHIGENIA's eyes are drawn to those of the GLASS-EYED MAN on the screen.]

[Title card: "How much for her skin?"]

The young woman suffered from vanity. But she never told her father.

[In the background, image: IPHIGENIA's face is reflected in the eyes of the GLASS-EYED MAN.]

Iphigenia never told her father anything, despite his love for her. And her father thought of nothing, nothing at all.

[In the foreground, live, ADOLFO, CAMILA, and IPHIGENIA are caught in the camera's flash, in tight, frozen smiles, as their photo is taken.]

In the background, image fills the screen: flames and a pink suit made ash. In the distance, the chorus to Gluck's opera fades.]

[BLACKOUT.]

Act 1, Scene 1

Part One IPHIGENIA'S FLIGHT (From the City)

[The voice of the VIRTUAL MC is heard calling out in the darkness:]

VIRTUAL M.C.

(voiceover)

The next, the next sound that you hear. . . the next sound that you hear will be. . .

[Ambient trance music fades up. In the background on a screen, a TV NEWS ANCHOR sits behind a desk. He is "on the air.]"

NEWS ANCHOR

It is estimated that one thousand one hundred and ten people have disappeared today In this land of *guerrilleros* and other corporate revolutionaries. General Adolfo will not confirm the disappearances, But will say that all citizens must vote for him in this week's elections, Which already threaten his current standing in office, as the opposition is starting to gain ground. The general will need a miracle to stay in office.

[In the foreground, live, in a garden of bougainvillea, IPHIGENIA is revealed in light: a blindfold over her eyes, and a branch in her hand. She wears a designer dress. There is a piñata over her, dangling from the air. The piñata is of a large frog, crudely designed, with a long, relentless tongue.]

But if some great personal tragedy were to befall him, it is possible the country would embrace him again. No one can resist the tug of the human heart. One senseless death, of a rich girl and we will be united in grief, sorrow, and peace. Do you hear me, Iphigenia?

[IPHIGENIA turns slightly toward the screen.]

Do you hear me?

IPHIGENIA

Iphigenia was born centuries upon centuries ago. I have watched her grow up, only to see her die over and over, story upon story. I have lived inside her skin Which has been rearranged So that she will always remain a young girl With delicate wrists and tender breasts. And I have kept silent. I have done my father's doing, I have honored my mother's way. I have let myself be adored by the far-away gaze Of a crowd who wants to get a look at the girl, a good look at the girl, Whom fortune has blessed. And now on this day of days, On this day of saints, All I want is to be free of Iphigenia, To be free of her certain fate.

[The specter of CAMILA, Iphigenia's mother, is glimpsed through the bougainvillea, and through the camera's surveillant eye. She shout-sings:]

CAMILA

Iphigenia! Iphigenia! Where are you, daughter?

[In the background, on the screen, the TV NEWS ANCHOR looks on. Behind him a blur of fragments of newscasts real and imagined swirls: a mix of atrocities and shiny products ready for mass consumption.]

NEWS ANCHOR

In the city today, Iphigenia, the general's daughter, had a birthday. It was a private affair. Sources will not say what she was given, but it is estimated that there were a lot of presents, many of them from Cartier.

[In the foreground, IPHIGENIA strikes the piñata. She takes off the blindfold. The piñata tips for a moment, then releases a shower of dead black birds and dried black petals. Freeze. Light splits IPHIGENIA into harsh

angles.]

Some say this will be Iphigenia's last birthday, although this could not be confirmed. Nothing can be confirmed these days. But one thing is certain: it will only be a matter of time before death will find our beloved girl. It's all a matter of time down here, In the "ass of the continent," Called such by great military and diplomatic entities who have never lost the fever of their ambition, Before death finds us all. Do you hear me, Iphigenia? Do you hear me?

[The specter of CAMILA re-appears through the bougainvillea.]

CAMILA

Iphigenia! Iphigenia! Where are you going?

IPHIGENIA

I'm going to the northernmost point of the city. I'm going to shake loose the bad luck piñata that has rained down on my head black birds and black wings. I'm going to dance in the safe of an aircraft hangar that's been turned into a ballroom.

[In the near distance, ACHILLES is heard singing a vocal line from "The Deluge.]"

ACHILLES

[sings]

War is over,
the gods are over,
everything,
everything is over. . .

IPHIGENIA

And I'm going to let my body reign over the ragged people with their pale gleam.

[Ambient trance music grows louder, as ACHILLES vocal line repeats and fades into the mix.]

I'm going to ooh, and aah. I'm going to let my body be. And stop, stop being the general's daughter who lives in a walled-up garden by the light of the police.

[The specter of CAMILA re-appears through the bougainvillea. She is narcotized, half-asleep]

CAMILA

Iphigenia! Iphigenia! Where are you, daughter?

IPHIGENIA

Iphigenia is spun out onto a dark street Fragments of words fall upon her as she tries to forget who she is, where she. . . Dear gods, let me be anyone but Iphigenia. Erase my memory, escape my death. Only let me spin, oh gods, let me spin, for what I seek is an angel's rest.

[The specter of a heavily narcotized CAMILA begins to fade through the surveillant eyes. She is a blurred image reduced to a tight close-up of soft teeth.]

CAMILA

Iphigenia. . .

IPHIGENIA

Iphigenia sends herself into a phantasmagoric orbit: a wasteland of factories and blood-red tracks.

CAMILA

[fading]

Iphigenia. . .

IPHIGENIA

She is nearing the northernmost edge of the continent.

CAMILA

[fading]

Iphigenia. . .

[CAMILA disappears through the distorted lens of the camera, as does the NEWS ANCHOR's face from the screen. The red eye remains, occasionally blinking.]

IPHIGENIA

There is a cross painted on a factory wall, a large pink cross painted over a woman's scrawled name.

[Light catches a pink cross painted on a factory wall's façade.]

I look to it for comfort.

[IPHIGENIA reads the name written on the wall.]

[sings]

Adina. . .

[IPHIGENIA tries to touch the cross, which fades at her touch. Light catches another pink cross, another name.]

[sings]

Natacha. . .

[IPHIGENIA tries to touch the cross. It fades.]

Who are these girls?

[Out of a pale neon strip, VIOLETA IMPERIAL appears. She is a prematurely aged woman with a scarf around her head. She pushes a small cart filled with half-cooked chicken pieces.]

VIOLETA IMPERIAL

Girls in newly sewn dresses. I see them. Not like you. I can see you're different. That's a nice dress. You buy it? I make dresses. Cheap. You want me to make you a dress? I can make it right now. I got needle and thread. See? What kind of dress do you want, girl? With ruffles? Cut on the seam? Come. I make it for you.

IPHIGENIA

No.

VIOLETA IMPERIAL

Why not? You don't like Violeta? You don't like Violeta Imperial? Have a piece of chicken. I got legs and wings. For running, and flying, girl.

IPHIGENIA

I'm not hungry.

VIOLETA IMPERIAL

The aircraft hangar is a bit further on. You'll need your strength.

IPHIGENIA

How'd you know where I was headed?

VIOLETA IMPERIAL

You're all in shadow, girl. I can barely see you. . . .Hey, aren't you -?

IPHIGENIA

No.

VIOLETA IMPERIAL

Yes, you are. You've got the same face. You're the asshole's daughter.

IPHIGENIA

My father's not a —

VIOLETA IMPERIAL

Take a good look. Take a look at Violeta Imperial.

[VIOLETA opens jacket to reveal a map of scars on her body.]

This is your father's doing.

IPHIGENIA

He wouldn't. . .

VIOLETA IMPERIAL

His men took me into a room and cut me open with a blade. You hear screams? In the dry streets convulsing with electric signs? Those are the screams of the innocent, the tortured, the disappeared that find themselves in a potter's field.

IPHIGENIA

You're not in a potter's field.

VIOLETA IMPERIAL

Some are left. We're reminders. A walking warning for others who might wish to speak up against anything, or simply live in peace.

IPHIGENIA

What did you do?

VIOLETA IMPERIAL

Nothing.

IPHIGENIA

What do you mean?

VIOLETA IMPERIAL

I was taken into a cold room of a quiet house made of loose cinder block and cut open for nothing. For kissing a girl. "*Pata*," they called me. "We'll give you *pata*," they said as they cut through my flesh. I prayed to *Eleggua*, the god who opens all doors, and leads all ways. the god who stands at the cross-roads with his conch shell eyes staring in the light. You pray to him, girl?

IPHIGENIA

To *Eleggua*?

VIOLETA IMPERIAL

You should pray to him. I prayed.

"Prayer to Eleggua"

[sings]

Mi Dios, mi salvador, mi Eleggua. Tell me what to do. Tell me what to do. And I will.

[spoken]

And he said "Close your eyes." I fainted and let them cut me, as I dreamed about the girl I kissed, The sweet girl with brown eyes and a ruthless tongue who worked for the police, the sweet girl who betrayed me.

IPHIGENIA

I can have her reported. I can ask my father —

VIOLETA IMPERIAL

She's dead. I woke up in a potter's field at the edge of the city with her body next to me. They had made a hole in her throat, and had pulled her tongue out through the hole. She was to be my reminder. I don't get much kissed now. Not with this body stitched up by an errant doctor's hands. Needle, thread and a splash of violet water. That's what I got. Violeta Imperial, Royal Violet water. Hence my name. You want a piece of chicken? I got legs and wings.

IPHIGENIA

If my father knew

VIOLETA IMPERIAL

We all love our fathers. It's a daughter's curse. But ask him what he's done. And what you do by carrying his name.

IPHIGENIA

I am not my father's daughter.

VIOLETA IMPERIAL

You're going to be a bastard now?

IPHIGENIA

Those men that took you and — they will be punished. I will see to it. I will do whatever I can —

VIOLETA IMPERIAL

What are you going to do, Iphigenia, with your midnight lipstick and designer sheen?

IPHIGENIA

I was kidnapped last year. I was taken from my bed, stuffed inside a sack, and tossed into a jeep. I remember my nose bleeding. There was the smell of honeysuckle in the air. I was taken out of the car and tossed onto a hard floor. I could feel the bruises forming themselves on my skin. I kept still in the darkness of the sack.

VIOLETA IMPERIAL

In stillness lies virtue.

IPHIGENIA

You believe that?

VIOLETA IMPERIAL

It's a saying.

IPHIGENIA

There were voices in another room. Loud voices, and boots. I could hear a song on the radio.

[VIOLETA begins to sing softly.]

"La Morna"

VIOLETA IMPERIAL

[sings]

All the young girls
die in my arms
die like wounded birds
strangled by the palms.
IPHIGENIA

A torch song, the kind of song my mother sings alone in her room at night with the trace of vodka on her lips. The door to the room opened. A young man's voice said "Wake up, *puta*." When I opened my eyes, I felt strong hands poking at me. I screamed. The young man said "Shh. Your father's sending the money." And he pulled from deep inside his pants pocket some twine, and tied my arms behind my back, and he took a thin strip of cloth from inside another pocket, and he gagged me.

VIOLETA IMPERIAL

[sings softly]

All the silent girls
scream in the night
letting their tongues fall
upon the broken moonlight.

IPHIGENIA

He pulled me into another room and flashed a camera in my eyes. "This is for the papers," he said. "They'll pay for a picture of you."

[Shift to the screen: NEWS ANCHOR is standing against a backdrop of a field dotted with palms. Sporadic gunfire.]

NEWS ANCHOR

General Adolfo is trying to negotiate with the drug cartel To end its operation Project Zero Which is making all the rich flee the country in fear that their sons and daughters will be taken away and held for ransom There is no greater fear than the fear of losing prominent investors in what would be the largest growth of the multinational dollar in this country's history, Either that or having a loved one's ear sent in the mail.

[through the screen]

You hear that, Iphigenia?

IPHIGENIA

[to the screen]

What?

NEWS ANCHOR

Nobody misses you.

[Fade on the screen. Back to. . .]

IPHIGENIA

A car pulled up. My father's secretary was let in. He carried an envelope in his hands. It was stuffed with dollar bills. I was quickly untied. There were cuts on my arms and wrists from the twine, and piss down my legs. The young man took me by the arm and dragged me over to my father's secretary. "Don't worry. She's still a virgin, *cabron*," The next day, my picture was in the papers — The photo the young man had taken of me sitting on the stool: tied, gagged, and hungry. My father refused to recognize me. "The papers will print anything," he said, "My daughter, my dear, sweet Iphigenia, never went through this." I looked at my father with the memory of the young man's hands on me. "Father, why won't you hold me?"

VIOLETA IMPERIAL

They might as well have killed you up there in the country.

IPHIGENIA

What?

VIOLETA IMPERIAL

You can't do anything. You're at the mercy of your father. Like me. Like a piece of chicken. Want a taste?

IPHIGENIA

Here, and into the trash with you, remnant of the mutant underclass.

[IPHIGENIA throws dollars at VIOLETA and starts to walk away.]

VIOLETA IMPERIAL

I'm only speaking the truth.

IPHIGENIA

Which truth is that? You know, I almost believed you when you said all that about being cut up and my father's men,

VIOLETA IMPERIAL

I've the scars. . .

IPHIGENIA

Put there by someone else.

VIOLETA IMPERIAL

What are you saying -?

IPHIGENIA

I'm at no one's mercy, least of all my father.

VIOLETA IMPERIAL

You're blind, Iphigenia.

IPHIGENIA

I'd rather be blind than a walking corpse.

VIOLETA IMPERIAL

You're your father's daughter, after all.

IPHIGENIA

Shut up.

VIOLETA IMPERIAL

Cruelty is in your blood. Thanks to you this city will be smashed, And every soul will be uprooted from their homes.

IPHIGENIA

I gave you money. I don't want to hear anything else. I hear things all the time: voices, screams. . . I sit in my garden and cover my ears while my brother cries, because he needs his fix, he needs *coca* to keep him alive. He's not even a year old and he's already a junkie. Look at my tits. Go on. Touch. *Pata*.

VIOLETA IMPERIAL

Don't.

IPHIGENIA

I want you to. I want your hands on me. Squeeze them. Go on. Feel my tits.

VIOLETA IMPERIAL

You mock me.

IPHIGENIA

I mock myself. I breast-feed my own brother. He sucks me. For hours. . . .Keep your hands.

VIOLETA IMPERIAL

No.

IPHIGENIA

I disgust you?

VIOLETA IMPERIAL

There is no place for tenderness in my life.

IPHIGENIA

I don't know what tenderness is. I look for it. All the time. I close my eyes and pretend it exists. And then I think of those men, of how I was taken, of how my father. . .

VIOLETA IMPERIAL

Iphigenia, where are you going?

IPHIGENIA

To the northernmost edge.

VIOLETA IMPERIAL

It's better for young girls not to be seen. Come, Iphigenia.

IPHIGENIA

Take the money, Violeta. Devastate yourself for the promise of a blessed touch from this god-less girl. . .

VIOLETA IMPERIAL

The chicken is good, Iphigenia. Eat.

IPHIGENIA

Do not follow me.

[VIOLETA picks up the money, and recedes into the shadows. IPHIGENIA burns in the evening's acid glow.]

IPHIGENIA

The aircraft hangar is minutes away. I can see it from here, from the dust and gravel road that ruins the soles of my Gucci shoes. I can hear the unrelenting pulse of music made to un-still the heart.

[In the distance, ACHILLES is heard singing from the chorus of "The Deluge.]"

ACHILLES

[sings]

And all the pretty girls
dance in the deluge.

All the pretty girls. . .

IPHIGENIA

Aah. . .the crimson lights and purple strobe will soothe me, Will make this birthday more than just a creeping,
convulsive treachery Played on me by gods unwilling to grant me peace.

[Light catches another pink cross, another name on a factory wall's façade.]

Another pink cross, another name, and. . . I am bathed in the most heavenly. . .

"Ghost Trance"

[sings]

Yvonne. . .

[THREE FRESA GIRLS emanate from the factory walls. On their foreheads, metallic crescents are painted. Their dresses are stained.]

FRESA GIRL 1

[appears]

Yvonne? That's me.

IPHIGENIA

[sings]

Dulce. . . Magaly. . . Luz. . .

FRESA GIRL 2

[appears]

Luz? I'm Luz.

IPHIGENIA

[sings]

Aminta. . . Gladis. . . Yoli. . .

FRESA GIRL 3

[appears]

Hey. They finally spelled my name right. Yoli. With an "I" at the end, not a "y," like all the bastards think.

IPHIGENIA

Names upon names Foreign to my tongue I move them around in my mouth As I run my hands across the smooth surface of these factory walls

FRESA GIRL 1

Is that where we are? I haven't been near the factory in a long time.

FRESA GIRL 2

The last thing I want is to be near a sewing machine.

FRESA GIRL 3

We're here because of her.

FRESA GIRL 1

Who?

FRESA GIRL 3

Iphigenia.

FRESA GIRL 2

That bitch. She's been nipped and tucked since the day she was born.

IPHIGENIA

[sings]

Maria. . . Clotilde. . . Azul. . .

FRESA GIRL 1

Azul's gone, too?

IPHIGENIA

I feel these girls' hands on me. I feel myself pulled. . . Oh, their touch warms my skin. . .

FRESA GIRL 1

She must think we're living.

FRESA GIRL 3

With our throats cut?

FRESA GIRL 2

[To IPHIGENIA]

Hey girl, take a look at my jagged necklace.

FRESA GIRL 3

[To IPHIGENIA]

Take a good look, because your blood will be let soon.

IPHIGENIA

Everything is alive here. Everything I'd ever want. . .

FRESA GIRL 1

Oh. She doesn't know about us.

FRESA GIRL 2

What?

FRESA GIRL 1

The *fresa girls*.

FRESA GIRL 3

The ripe girls, like strawberries, who come from the deep country to work in the factories.

FRESA GIRL 2

Who spend twelve hours a day at a sewing machine.

FRESA GIRL 1

Come time to get paid

FRESA GIRL 3

Mere dollars a week

ALL FRESA GIRLS

We'd go out all night

FRESA GIRL 1

To remind ourselves

FRESA GIRL 3

What a bit of tenderness

FRESA GIRL 2

What a bit of candy limbs and tainted love can. . .

ALL FRESA GIRLS

Do to wreck a body.

IPHIGENIA

I could be one of these girls. Who says I have to be Iphigenia?

FRESA GIRL 1

She really doesn't know about us.

FRESA GIRL 2

The shit girls.

FRESA GIRL 3

Who find themselves dead.

FRESA GIRL 2

Killed by anonymous hands.

FRESA GIRL 1

Outside the clubs, bodies violated and slashed on the dirt-gravel fields.

FRESA GIRL 3

And no one knows. . . anything.

[To IPHIGENIA]

Because who is going to lift a hand to save a fresa girl?

IPHIGENIA

[sings]

Nesha. . . Mora. . . Doris. . .

[The stage becomes filled with pink crosses and scrawls of women's names floating in space in a montage which frames IPHIGENIA as she moves, transported.]

FRESA GIRL 2

Let's scare her. Let's show her our wounds.

FRESA GIRL 1

No. She's too happy.

FRESA GIRL 2

Bitch. Look at that dress.

FRESA GIRL 3

Look at her swirl.

FRESA GIRL 2

It's a Chanel.

IPHIGENIA

[sings]

The names of all these girls enter my brain.
I take them on, and undulate.
Oh. I am losing myself.

[IPHIGENIA spins among the crosses.]

FRESA GIRL 3

I remember dancing.

FRESA GIRL 1

Yeah?

FRESA GIRL 3

Like she's doing now.

FRESA GIRL 1

Remind me.

FRESA GIRL 3

I remember. . . hips, and torso. . .

FRESA GIRL 2

I remember arms. Lots of arms. And feet.

IPHIGENIA

[sings]

I am losing every part of me,
and I'm all right.
FRESA GIRL 2

She's doing it all wrong.

FRESA GIRL 1

She doesn't know the moves. What can she know stuck in a garden all day?

FRESA GIRL 3

I like the way she dances.

FRESA GIRL 2

It's like she's stuck inside herself.

FRESA GIRL 3

Sexy-weird.

IPHIGENIA

I want to be just like you, girls.

FRESA GIRL 3

Like us?

IPHIGENIA

Names on a wall Written by lovers who caress me.

FRESA GIRL 3

Caress us?

IPHIGENIA

You are beautiful girls.

FRESA GIRL 1

Hey, Iphigenia. Take us to the club, will you?

IPHIGENIA

To the club?

FRESA GIRL 1

You can get us in, can't you?

IPHIGENIA

I can get anyone in.

FRESA GIRL 1

Take us, then.

FRESA GIRL 3

And we will wear our hair in pillows.

FRESA GIRL 2

And our jackets square.

FRESA GIRL 1

And we'll go among the living again.

IPHIGENIA

Among the living?

FRESA GIRL 3

Take us dancing, Iphigenia. Take us away from the walls of these factories Where we left our skin.

IPHIGENIA

What?

FRESA GIRL 1 & 2

Take us.

ALL FRESA GIRLS & IPHIGENIA

Oohing and aahing into infinity.

[ALL FRESA GIRLS freeze mid-dance. Burst of white noise as montage fades and music blares. IPHIGENIA is caught in the unending column of light of the aircraft hangar turned club. Her voice is amplified.]

IPHIGENIA

The aircraft hangar opens an electric wound. Somnambulant bodies throb under the crimson light. Girls with cellophane chests Put blue pacifiers in their tender mouths While Diesel shirt boys twirl and hip-shake To a subsonic bass line.

[ALL FRESA GIRLS un-freeze, and move among the throbbing mass of shadows. FRESA GIRL 2 shouts over the club's noise.]

FRESA GIRL 2

Hey. It's gotten faster.

FRESA GIRL 1

What?

FRESA GIRL 2

Everything. Look at the screen.

FRESA GIRL 3

What?

FRESA GIRL 2

The screen.

[A rapid-fire succession of images pulsates on a large screen — innocent geometric shapes, atrocities, fragments of magazine ads, jumbles of letters. FRESA GIRL 1 shouts.]

FRESA GIRL 1

It's cool.

FRESA GIRL 2

What?

FRESA GIRL 3

Let's move.

[FRESA GIRL 3 writhes to the sound. The other GIRLS join her.]

IPHIGENIA

A thousand factory girls move as the beat consumes The everlasting promise of sundown. Iphigenia feels her name escape through the pale insomnia Of the fake Gucci, Prada, and Helmut Lang seething around her. "Ooh, and aah" she lets herself cry

ALL FRESA GIRLS

Ooh, and aah. . .

IPHIGENIA

As the cobras hiss in the blue lounge to one side of the wide-open hangar. I have become invisible in this flickering light. Lick me.

[IPHIGENIA joins the writhing GIRLS midst the throbbing shadows.]

On the screen, the images give sharp way to the digital image of the VIRTUAL MC, a floating face with an obscene mouth and liquid eyes, who speaks with the hollow, teasing, sounds of a true lounge lizard cum DJ. He is the one who spins the music that keeps the writhing at maximum.]

VIRTUAL M.C.

Lick her, cries the Virtual MC, and welcome to the end, *el fin, finis!* Lick her face and rub up against the climactic wood of a planet about to go dust. This is *el fin*, children. This is the end. Hold onto your *cojones*. We got the sound to un-still your hearts blasting through tomorrow, *hasta manana*, until the wee bleak trash can Sinatra hours of a dim morning that will go on for days, or until the next brutality brings us face to face. Lick and moan, *cabrones*. Moan in the creep of this psychedelic light Because here we do what the state says, Which means if you've got *cachete*, moolah, Euros, or that ever-elusive *yanqui* dollar, You can move your peroxide pigtails until the stroke of Boom It's time to go back to the factory and the good ol' foreman pinching your mestizo pocket.

[On a part of the screen, the video image of ACHILLES is found. He wears a women's slip, boots, and glitter lipstick. He has a tattoo of a large tiger down one arm. A part of him is descended from Calderon de la Barca's version of Achilles in The Monster of the Gardens (1667), but he doesn't know it.]

His looped vocal line "War is over, the gods are over, everything, everything is over" is barely heard underneath the thumping bass.]

And don't forget to save your hats, fuckers, Because when you walk out of here stammering with your razed heads Buzzing with the kill of a hundred-and-twenty beats every minute from nine p.m. to three a.m. and into the light, into the light, into the light . . . or if you're willing to trigger longer than the minimum cover charge will allow Cause the E won't let you come down, won't let you come. . . you are going to need a hat To get through the streets covered with bodies fresh from another US-backed revolution Waiting for you on your

front step. Lick, moan, and lift up your hands, guerrilla ballerinas showing off your Hello Kitty straps. It's time to smash your heads, down those raspberry martinis, and dream of Mars, Because "the war is over, the gods are over, everything. . .," *hijos* and *hijas de la gran puta*, is over. So lick the scab off those valentine lips,

[On the screen, ACHILLES offers his tongue to the VIRTUAL MC, who places a tab of E onto it. Simultaneously, live, FRESA GIRL 2 places a tab of E on IPHIGENIA's tongue, mid-dance.]

and give your tits and dicks up for the boy With the nasty chip in his heel. That's right, our trapeze soldier, Our very own war-bred pop myth with Day-Glo hips that move, oh yes.

IPHIGENIA

Who's he talking about?

FRESA GIRL 2

The boy with the body. See?

VIRTUAL M.C.

The boy with cherry crush, crazy love, hot pink, star red

[The image of the VIRTUAL MC begins to disintegrate.]

Lips. Achilles.

[A piercing sound. Large letters on the screen now read "Patria o Mierda." These letters bleed into smaller letters that read "Die for Your Country or You're Fucked."]

ACHILLES is on video on all the screens. Behind him mutated geometric shapes spin. He sings.]

"The Deluge"

ACHILLES

Stoked up on the cocaine Living with a migraine Looking for an end to end all my days. Strolling through the Backwoods Living on the wild glue Taking what I can for what I pay. Swimming with the *ratas* Behind *la policia* Cutting white snow on the hoods of *la migra* Pulling small razors from inside *mi lengua* Cutting young men *en carne viva* And all the pretty girls Dance in the deluge All the pretty girls Kiss. . . Why don't you kiss me? Killing for a bum rush Off a lousy bum fuck *Putas* in the corner Begging for a blow-job Caught in *la tijera* Of a road *sin pena* Spinning my brain: oh what can I, what can I. . .? And all the pretty girls Dance in the deluge All the *fresa* girls Die. . .

[The FRESA GIRLS swoon to the image of ACHILLES on video on the screens. He continues singing.]

Why don't you die. . .?

[ACHILLES looks at IPHIGENIA through the screen]

Where is your father, girl? Where is your father? He's left you all alone in the world. Tell me.

[IPHIGENIA is about to answer ACHILLES' image, but ACHILLES kisses the camera's eye.]

And all the pretty girls Dance in the deluge All the pretty girls Kiss. . .

[ACHILLES' image freezes on the video. Time shift. Pinspot on IPHIGENIA, still.]

IPHIGENIA

Hold me again. My limbs ache. I tremble. I blur. One hundred-and-twenty beats per minute: my heart goes. The *fresa* girls surround me with their stained skirts, and metallic foreheads. I move, pulse, escape. The inside of my chest bursting. I tease myself into thinking no one can find me here. And then I see you standing beside me, father except you don't look like yourself. You wear a smart coat and tall hair, and you're smiling with razor teeth, father.

IPHIGENIA

You place your hand over my eyes, and whisper "Shh, angel."

[THE FRESA GIRLS hiss.]

ALL FRESA GIRLS

Shh.

IPHIGENIA

As a knife comes into my back and I feel myself fall a thousand feet down

ALL FRESA GIRLS

Shh.

IPHIGENIA

A thousand feet into darkness. And you don't say anything, father. You don't even say

ALL FRESA GIRLS

Shh.

IPHIGENIA

You just smile. With white snow on your tongue I am laser-lit. Suspended. A hundred million particles of light. Iphigenia is dying. Hold me.

[Spot dims on IPHIGENIA. Time shift. Light on VIRTUAL MC as he re-appears on the large screen. ACHILLES image is no longer on the screen. Only geometric shapes remain where his video face and body used to be.]

VIRTUAL M.C.

Well, sluts, it looks like our kissing boy with the spaghetti-strap chemise has "disappeared," As our dear general Adolfo likes to say. Isn't that right, Iphigenia?

IPHIGENIA

What?

VIRTUAL M.C.

Not to worry. Our blinking eyes may catch the lipstick trace of this divining angel in the not-too-distant time we have to say goodbye. Every state has someone to absolve them of their debts, and well, we've got Achilles, The glam messiah for the savagely tricked. A little shake, rattle, and moving of those hips, and everyone swoons on the beat, and forgets how they have been exposed horizontally to the ruling government Who slaps their asses without so much as a lick. Plunge, my million and one disgraced ones, my sorry children who live day to day, plunge into ecstasy, As we let the letter of reason fall like a take in a silent movie, Here's some ooh and aah to send you into *la mala noche* of my sad dreams.

[VIRTUAL MC's face fades.]

IPHIGENIA

Where did they take him? Where's Achilles?

FRESA GIRL 1

I don't know. Who knows anything around here?

FRESA GIRL 2

He's got *chulo* legs, eh?

FRESA GIRL 1

Yeah. And in that slip. You can see right up his. . .

FRESA GIRL 2

"*El chulo culo*," that's what I used to call him.

IPHIGENIA

What?

FRESA GIRL 1

The ready ass.

IPHIGENIA

Where is he?

FRESA GIRL 3

You don't want him, girl. He's inside the screen. Stay here. Stay with us. We'll keep dancing.

IPHIGENIA

He couldn't have disappeared.

FRESA GIRL 1

You want to see Achilles? You want to kiss the twisted boy with the golden eyes?

IPHIGENIA

You know where he is?

FRESA GIRL 1

Give us the dress.

IPHIGENIA

I have to go.

FRESA GIRL 2

You're not going anywhere, Iphigenia.

[THE FRESA GIRLS attack IPHIGENIA. They tear off her dress, nylons, shoes, earrings. As they do so, they chant.]

"The Dead Girls' Lament"

ALL FRESA GIRLS

In the land of the living, the dead will reign.

FRESA GIRL 1

Ivonne,

FRESA GIRL 2

Luz,

FRESA GIRL 3

Yoli. . .

FRESA GIRL 1

A litany of the dead,

FRESA GIRL 2

Of the forgotten and unforgiving Who have been left to walk

FRESA GIRL 3

without graves.

[IPHIGENIA is left wearing only a slip, as the FRESA GIRLS walk away midst the fading somnambulant beat, tossing her clothes about. They speak-sing an improvised chant.]

FRESA GIRL 1

Mmm. Prada.

FRESA GIRL 2

Mmm. Dior.

FRESA GIRL 3

Mmm. Gucci. For her.

FRESA GIRL 1

For her

ALL FRESA GIRLS

Everything is for her. . .

[The FRESA GIRLS exit. Silence. IPHIGENIA sings.]

"Prayer to Eleggua (reprise)"

IPHIGENIA

[sings]

Mi Dios, mi salvador, mi Eleggua. . .

Tell me what to do.

And I won't ask for anything anymore,

But your love.

[ACHILLES appears, live. He is still wearing his slip, a pacifier hangs from his neck. He sings.]

"La Morna (Reprise)"

ACHILLES

All the young girls Sing in the darkness Letting their torsos fall Upon the morning's light.

[IPHIGENIA sees ACHILLES. Blackout.]

end of Part One

Act 2, Scene 1

Part Two IPHIGENIA IN BETWEEN

[A field outside the aircraft hangar. Night. IPHIGENIA and ACHILLES, both in their slips, are entwined. They are back-lit with neon, seen in silhouette. FRESA GIRL 1 and 2 appear. They each wear a version of the Chanel dress they tore from Iphigenia.]

FRESA GIRL 1 & 2

Iphigenia moves through the killing fields unaware of the bones in her midst.

FRESA GIRL 2

She slums with the boy who glitters at the furthest edge of the city.

FRESA GIRL 1

Cherry crush, crazy love, hot pink, star red:

FRESA GIRL 1 & 2

their lips bleed.

FRESA GIRL 1

Tattoo me a cross, Iphigenia.

[FRESA GIRLS disappear as a blistering montage of sound and light shows CAMILA and ADOLFO multiplied in the eyes of the surveillance cameras, and the NEWS ANCHOR fights his way out of the screen and is slowly made 3-D.]

"House Mix"

NEWS ANCHOR

In Chalkis or Pylos or wherever else floods and famine. . . Hundreds of thousands are killed. There is no count. No numbers have been released in what is the most devastating disaster of the century Which changes every minute. This is a long century and some people like to count the days. Though you won't find me, ladies and gentleman, I have been covering this story for so long I don't get to count. I just look for the airplane to get me the hell out. One more body dug up from a grave and I will shoot them all to splinters. Put the magazine in and let me rip. You hear that, general? General Adolfo?

[ADOLFO is now inside the screen. The NEWS ANCHOR is outside the screen.]

ADOLFO

I recommend a good plate of chicken broth with potatoes, and yams.

NEWS ANCHOR

Is that your official statement, general?

ADOLFO

I think it's safe to say that when we move on, there will not be a shred of evidence we were here.

NEWS ANCHOR

What about your daughter, general?

ADOLFO

My daughter?

NEWS ANCHOR

She's been missing for two days. Some say she's been kidnapped again. Some say you have engineered the kidnapping yourself to have her killed, And thus win your people's eternal sympathy, not to mention, the election.

ADOLFO

My daughter is at home, where she always is.

NEWS ANCHOR

Like when she was taken last year, general?

ADOLFO

No harm will ever come to my daughter. Not from my hands.

NEWS ANCHOR

Is that what your wife says, general?

[CAMILA is inside the screen, an oversized cocktail glass in hand.]

CAMILA

I hope they plaster her body all over the papers. Hang her up, boys. Get some bamboo and string up my Iphigenia. Screw her 'til sundown.

ADOLFO

A general has many burdens.

NEWS ANCHOR

And your son, general?

ADOLFO

My son?

NEWS ANCHOR

Orestes.

ADOLFO

He's a baby. He doesn't know about such things.

[ORESTES can be heard crying inside the box.]

NEWS ANCHOR

General?

ADOLFO

The name's Adolfo. And leave us in peace.

[ADOLFO and CAMILA disappear inside the darkness of the screen. NEWS ANCHOR, not knowing what to do, stands for a moment, then decides to follow them into the screen. End of "House Mix" section.]

Neon rises and clears on IPHIGENIA and ACHILLES entwined.]

ACHILLES

Slip me your dick.

IPHIGENIA

I don't have one.

ACHILLES

I thought the rich had everything.

IPHIGENIA

Don't be coarse.

ACHILLES

Does it offend you?

IPHIGENIA

Stop.

ACHILLES

You're in me. I can't.

IPHIGENIA

I like your skin.

ACHILLES

Taste it. Lick it. Do what you will. I am used to being devoured. Slip me your tongue.

IPHIGENIA

I don't. . .

ACHILLES

You want it all, girl. That's why you asked for the stars to come down and screw you. You see this? This is my hand. I'm going to stick it

IPHIGENIA

Stop.

ACHILLES

I'm crude. I'm what you want. Lick me. Suspend yourself in my cradle. I am falling down like a mutant star hungry for skin. You are the girl-boy-thing I need. This is another sex we're making, twin. Kiss me.

IPHIGENIA

. . .And my tongue moves through your open mouth sinking into saliva and teeth and all that makes you. I watched you last night, my eyes were transfixed. I caught a glimmer of myself in them. At first I didn't realize I was looking at my eyes, but then I looked again, and realized They were my eyes transformed by yours, burned by your iris. My slip became yours, and our legs became one.

ACHILLES

There's death here.

IPHIGENIA

Where?

ACHILLES

All around. Bones. Bodies torn, buried in graves. Left by men hungry for money. You know the kind I mean. Like those men that took you in the night. . .

IPHIGENIA

I don't want to think about that.

ACHILLES

Everyone knows the girl framed in the magazine: Buy her picture. She'll suffer for you as you sleep.

IPHIGENIA

Did you buy a picture of me?

ACHILLES

Pleasure comes in ways you can't even dream. The pursuit of it blasts us all. Rip down the wall and you will see one hundred million atrocities Perpetuated and executed in the name of pleasure. I've been asked to be frozen, caught in an image on a screen. "Just sing, convulsive angel. Sing that line over and over. Move those hips. But don't make a sound, a true sound, because we will kill you." So I spit poison in the night. I graffiti my skin. I fuck my own celebrity.

IPHIGENIA

There are better pictures of me than the one you bought. I can show you.

ACHILLES

Zig down my spine, twin. Let's make love on top of the dead bodies that have been lying beneath us for centuries. Because that's what you want — a touch of the obscene.

[The tabloid photo of IPHIGENIA, bound and gagged, is projected onto ACHILLES' slip, his body.]

IPHIGENIA

The fields disappear in a sting of light that bleeds colors foreign to the eyes. Mouths eclipse each other. Consume me.

ACHILLES

Can you come straight through me? In a flash?

IPHIGENIA

I will burn you.

ACHILLES

Slow down.

IPHIGENIA

I want to kill the tabloid girl that envelopes your skin. I want to bury her in your mouth and thighs. . .

ACHILLES

You move too fast, girl.

IPHIGENIA

You bought my picture when it was sold on the street. Did you make love to me then? Did you press the picture of me against yourself and blush At the thought of me bound -?

ACHILLES

Sink to me.

IPHIGENIA

I will sink and get rid of every bit of me.

ACHILLES

What is your weakness? I will give it to you.

[The tabloid photo engulfs them. FRESA GIRL 1 & 2 appear. They are in yet another version of the Chanel dress, which is becoming unrecognizable now — barely a trace of its origin.]

FRESA GIRL 1

Iphigenia stirs inside the flesh of the boy with the glitter lips flaunting her sex for all to see.

FRESA GIRL 2

Where do you think you are, girl? You don't get anything here for free.

FRESA GIRL 1

A tabloid lover will find you on the debris river and sink you into the junk food wrappers Stretched past greasy fingers and salty lids itching for sleep.

FRESA GIRL 2

Tattoo me a tiger, Iphigenia. Just like the one Achilles has down his arm. Give me its milk.

[The FRESA GIRLS disappear. The tabloid photo fades in flickering black-and-white.]

IPHIGENIA

You are the sorriest boy I ever met. What's that you got in your bloodstream: nicotine, caffeine, coke, glue?

ACHILLES

A Mars bar, some acid tabs, and E.

IPHIGENIA

All muscle. Didn't you use to be an archer, boy? A wing-footed archer with limbs traced in golden armor?

ACHILLES

I used to be everything.

IPHIGENIA

A regular dream.

ACHILLES

Curl around me.

IPHIGENIA

I don't want anything but your tongue.

ACHILLES

Coax it. It will sing for you. I am easily won.

IPHIGENIA

Scar.

ACHILLES

Feel nothing but my tongue.

IPHIGENIA

Right on the eyebrow. You were cut once.

ACHILLES

I cut myself with a blade when I was young. I wanted to brand myself before someone else would. I wanted a mark on me. Everyone is branded here. Even those that pretend they are un-marked. So, I cut. On the slant of my brow. Until blood ran into my eyes. Here. Look at it. Burn your candle on it. It says I am a boy and girl at once. And what I do, who I am, is punishable by death, or worse: endless repetition.

[sings]

War is over, the gods are over, everything, everything is over. . .

[spoken]

The crowd trips and sways for a trick of my light. Take me into your bloodstream.

IPHIGENIA

Erase me.

[She takes a tab of acid from his tongue with a kiss.]

ACHILLES

We are night-crawling, girl. Your heart is racing inside the soft part of my chest Where you hide like a drop of rain And never cry.

[ACHILLES and IPHIGENIA are rapt in the night air. They are suspended in light, and sleep. Time shift.]

Light comes up on silver clouds and jagged trees. Two masks appear between the trees, as if this were a stage set: A VIRGIN PUTA, who sounds like Iphigenia, and the GENERAL'S ASS, who sounds like Adolfo. The General's mask has frog legs dangling from its large ass, and carries a thin whip in his hand. This is played as a commedia piece for an imaginary audience. This is Iphigenia's nightmare hallucination.]

"The Story of the Virgin *Put*a, the Hermaphrodite Prince, and the Blessed General's Ass" (a satyr play)

VIRGIN PUTA

You should've seen the sky. It was beaming green. Pulse pulse. . . I was dancing.

GENERAL'S ASS

Slap.

VIRGIN PUTA

Oh, father, don't hurt me. I only wish to please.

GENERAL'S ASS

Don't you like my ass, daughter?

VIRGIN PUTA

I love it, but you can't walk around with it out in the open all night.

GENERAL'S ASS

Slap.

VIRGIN PUTA

Oh, father, don't hurt me.

GENERAL'S ASS

You were made to be sacrificed, daughter. Open your legs.

VIRGIN PUTA

But how will I stand, father?

GENERAL'S ASS

You will be bent.

VIRGIN PUTA

Is that the custom, father?

GENERAL'S ASS

It is for all the virgin putas.

VIRGIN PUTA

How long will you stay in me, father?

GENERAL'S ASS

Until you've learned the truth about me.

VIRGIN PUTA

I prefer lies, father. They go down so much better.

GENERAL'S ASS

Slap.

VIRGIN PUTA

Do I offend, father?

GENERAL'S ASS

You have been made meat.

VIRGIN PUTA

I am still your daughter. Love me.

GENERAL'S ASS

Stutter, little girl. Beg. Plead.

VIRGIN PUTA

I-I-I will, father.

GENERAL'S ASS

Stutter again.

VIRGIN PUTA

I-I-I. . .

GENERAL'S ASS

That's how you should be. No words will escape your lips. You are mine, daughter.

VIRGIN PUTA

I will yield. Like you have taught me.

GENERAL'S ASS

You must resist me.

VIRGIN PUTA

I-I-I will.

[At a slight distance, a HERMAPHRODITE PRINCE, who sounds like Achilles, dances in a field, lost in himself, while in real time ACHILLES slips away un-noticed from IPHIGENIA's side, and disappears past the edge of the field.]

HERMAPHRODITE PRINCE

[sings]

"Bathroom girl, oscillate those eyelids. Smuggle my gaze."

GENERAL'S ASS

Who sings? Tell me. Speak.

VIRGIN PUTA

It is a prince, father.

GENERAL'S ASS

This bitch?

HERMAPHRODITE PRINCE

[sings]

"Silver strands of moaning flesh will I be. . ."

GENERAL'S ASS

Seize his throat. Slice his flesh. Do not dance for me.

HERMAPHRODITE PRINCE

Don't you want to watch me?

GENERAL'S ASS

What?

HERMAPHRODITE PRINCE

Make love to your daughter.

VIRGIN PUTA

Oh, father, please.

HERMAPHRODITE PRINCE

I'll be any sex you want me to be.

GENERAL'S ASS

Scratch her with your fingernails. Suckle her, boy.

HERMAPHRODITE PRINCE

[by rote]

Whore. Bitch.

VIRGIN PUTA

More.

GENERAL'S ASS

Slap.

HERMAPHRODITE PRINCE

Slap.

VIRGIN PUTA

You are so stoned.

HERMAPHRODITE PRINCE

So are you. You know, there's a place out by the fake boardwalk Where they've painted a pretend ocean for the tourists to see. We could go there.

GENERAL'S ASS

Stay put.

VIRGIN PUTA

But father. . .

HERMAPHRODITE PRINCE

We'll just stay here, Iphigenia.

VIRGIN PUTA

Don't call me that.

HERMAPHRODITE PRINCE

Isn't that your name?

GENERAL'S ASS

There are no names here. Only bodies. Do as you are told.

[The GENERAL'S ASS strikes the HERMAPHRODITE PRINCE on the ass with the whip.]

HERMAPHRODITE PRINCE

I bleed. Iphigenia. . . .

GENERAL'S ASS

Hands on her throat. That's right.

VIRGIN PUTA

B-b-but, father. . .

[The HERMAPHRODITE PRINCE chokes the VIRGIN PUTA. She falls limp.]

HERMAPHRODITE PRINCE

Iphigenia. . .

[The HERMAPHRODITE PRINCE collapses.]

GENERAL'S ASS

Her double. But you've done the trick, bitch. Now I will tell you how she should be killed. Lead her into a quiet house off the main road. She will follow you if you tell her a lover waits for her. Then close the door, blind her, and pierce her with a knife. She's not my daughter anymore. She has abandoned me.

IPHIGENIA

Father?

GENERAL'S ASS

I love you so much I will do anything for you. Anything.

IPHIGENIA

Father, hold me!

[The mask of the GENERAL'S ASS spews black birds from its hole. IPHIGENIA screams. The HERMAPHRODITE PRINCE, the VIRGIN PUTA, and the GENERAL'S ASS drop their masks to reveal VIOLETA IMPERIAL, FRESA GIRL 2, and FRESA GIRL 1. End of "Satyr play.]"

Iphigenia comes back to me. Her story is fresh upon my skin. Destroy me.

FRESA GIRL 1

What's the matter, girl? Didn't you like our show?

IPHIGENIA

Scavenge me. Wreck my heart.

FRESA GIRL 2

Who are you talking to, girl?

IPHIGENIA

Money. Do you need money?

VIOLETA IMPERIAL

What are you saying, child?

IPHIGENIA

Under my bed. I have new bills that aren't even in circulation yet.

FRESA GIRL 1

We don't want anything.

IPHIGENIA

What do you mean? Everybody wants. . .

VIOLETA IMPERIAL

We don't need anything, child.

FRESA GIRL 2

We disappeared a long time ago. Nobody needs anything from us.

IPHIGENIA

What are you-? Your throat. . .

FRESA GIRL 2

Razor. Right on the breath.

IPHIGENIA

You're dead?

FRESA GIRL 1

We're all dead.

FRESA GIRL 2

Another pink cross, another name. . .

[FRESA GIRL 1 and 2 start to walk away.]

VIOLETA IMPERIAL

The country needs you, Iphigenia. We need a girl like you to give us hope.

IPHIGENIA

What?

[VIOLETA IMPERIAL touches IPHIGENIA's forehead with the palm of her hand: a benediction.]

VIOLETA IMPERIAL

You're dead.

[VIOLETA IMPERIAL joins the FRESA GIRLS. They walk away, and disappear among the jagged trees. Time shift. IPHIGENIA is awake.]

IPHIGENIA

Achilles?

[ACHILLES emerges from a part of the field. He is in a state of delirium. He is high.]

"Liquid Haze"

ACHILLES

[sings]

Wake me at dawn
pierced through feeling
Re-inscribe the terror
Of the pulsing light.
No sign,
No sign of trembling.
I have left you dry.

IPHIGENIA

Did you know, Achilles? Did you know we were being watched, that we're surrounded by ghosts? You have tricked me.

ACHILLES

[sings]

Trick and sway the boy twist.
He's got a gadget up his sleeve,
And he knows
How to use it.
IPHIGENIA

Look at me. Please.

ACHILLES

[sings]

Shaved eyebrows distort my lens.
Give me a compact,
Maybe I can see.
Got a blue tab.
Wanna split
With me?
IPHIGENIA

You have poisoned me. My teeth gnash, are made raw.

ACHILLES

[sings]

You have fallen with me.
Sheltered by my glitz.
Is that slip for me?
IPHIGENIA

It was.

ACHILLES

[sings]

My shape can hold you, girl.

IPHIGENIA

No.

ACHILLES

[spoken]

Where are you going?

IPHIGENIA

I want to hear the people scream.

ACHILLES

[sings]

Lacerate me.

IPHIGENIA

I've heard screams in my sleep. Blinding shots of electricity: into earlobes and soles of feet. And I have closed my eyes, and covered my ears. I have pretended I couldn't feel anything. I have been dreaming, Achilles: reckless in sleep.

ACHILLES

You're with me.

IPHIGENIA

I have been trying to erase every bit of me, so that I could make something else out of myself, so that I could feel something with this body that has been denied feeling for so long. But Iphigenia is still here, isn't she? She still owes her country.

ACHILLES

You don't owe anybody anything.

IPHIGENIA

Where are we?

ACHILLES

In the sky.

IPHIGENIA

Every muscle in my body is trembling.

ACHILLES

The sun will be up soon.

IPHIGENIA

Everything hurts.

ACHILLES

Shh.

[FRESA GIRL 1 & 2 are heard hissing in the distance. Their hiss is amplified and electronically distorted.]

FRESA GIRL 1 & 2

(VO)

Shh.

IPHIGENIA

The girls hiss.

ACHILLES

What?

IPHIGENIA

The dead girls from the factory, from the club. . .

ACHILLES

You're dreaming.

IPHIGENIA

Are you going to kill me?

ACHILLES

I'm a coward, Iphigenia.

IPHIGENIA

You were raised by centaurs. You'll do anything.

ACHILLES

I don't know what centaurs you speak of.

IPHIGENIA

Achilles, son of the sea-nymph, raised by a glorious centaur, a deceiver of men.

ACHILLES

That's in the past, isn't it?

IPHIGENIA

Do you remember? I remember things that I haven't even lived.

ACHILLES

I have erased everything.

IPHIGENIA

With acid tabs and a Mars bar?

ACHILLES

I am completely remade.

IPHIGENIA

I think I am what the past has made me.

ACHILLES

You think too much.

IPHIGENIA

You won't let me die, then?

ACHILLES

Lean on me, twin.

IPHIGENIA

Look. Your tiger has tattooed itself on my skin.

ACHILLES

You'll forget me.

IPHIGENIA

No.

ACHILLES

You'll walk into the club one night, watch me on the screen, and you'll spit at me.

IPHIGENIA

Don't.

ACHILLES

You'll grab my legs and trip me out of the screen, and everything will go black

IPHIGENIA

I'll do anything. Watch me.

ACHILLES

And you'll laugh like all the others.

IPHIGENIA

I'll make you give me everything.

ACHILLES

And you'll beam your novocaine teeth, and pound me,

IPHIGENIA

I will destroy every bit of your celebrity.

ACHILLES

[continuing]

as the virtual MC strings me up and floats me above your reach:

[in the voice of the VIRTUAL MC]

"Pull a limb off the dangling boy, girls. Shake his tree. He won't feel anything. His blood is soaked in E."

IPHIGENIA

There will be no one left to adore but me.

ACHILLES

And you'll pull off my arms while I hang from the invisible hook attached to the ceiling And you'll parade my limbs for all to see. Then another girl will take my legs And you'll start to cut me. "Let's make a flower from his flesh," you'll say. And my twitching eyes will watch you make a corpse of me.

IPHIGENIA

You curse me.

ACHILLES

Give me your body.

IPHIGENIA

My teeth are numb.

ACHILLES

Put this in your mouth.

[ACHILLES puts a pacifier in her mouth, as he turns her body against him. Shift to baby ORESTES, who appears on the screen. He speaks in an adult voice, and is stoned.]

ORESTES

Right in my sock mouth yeah, that's what I need, my sister dear, my sister be. You are loud and right in my face. Is that why you got me stoked up for? I got *coca* in my brain since the day I was born. I don't need any

more coca cola, or any other *yanqui* dollar, get me? I bounce without any help from the motorcycle slaves killing off girls on the side of the street. You think I don't know anything? Pink cross on a factory wall. That's me. I'm the painter, dear. Your brother Orestes.

[IPHIGENIA spits out the pacifier.]

IPHIGENIA

Orestes?

ACHILLES

There's no one here but me.

ORESTES

I'm the one marking the time, day, and the very *santo espiritu* moment

[ORESTES makes the sign of the cross with his tiny hands.]

of the fresa girls meeting their death outside the rave. Rev, rev, rev on, sister.

[A lid is placed over ORESTES' head by an anonymous hand. We see he is inside a designer shoebox labelled "Gucci." Night bleeds into morning.]

IPHIGENIA

What have you done to me?

ACHILLES

Shh.

IPHIGENIA

I'm bleeding.

ACHILLES

I'm sorry.

IPHIGENIA

You wanted to split me.

ACHILLES

We're one, girl.

IPHIGENIA

You're a monster.

ACHILLES

I'll be dead soon.

IPHIGENIA

What?

ACHILLES

I've had AIDS for years. It's all a matter of time. . .

IPHIGENIA

You're lying.

ACHILLES

Why do you think they show me every night dancing in the same image? They know I'll die soon. "He'll be delirious in a beat. Watch him. Watch him lose his mind. He's our original rock n'roll suicide." I feel it sometimes. Words get botched. Everything goes slow.

IPHIGENIA

. . .Kiss me.

ACHILLES

You still want me?

IPHIGENIA

I want everything. I see myself in the sky, and I don't have this weird film on my skin. The whole earth has been irradiated, and I'm flying through the air looking down on my house, except it's not there anymore. There's nothing, except land and a few flowers made of human bones where my room used to be. And my baby brother is swimming in this large pool shaped like a guitar, like the one Elvis used to have. And he's happy. He's not drowning in *coca* anymore. He's free. And I'm on the gulf where the sea is gray, and no one wants a piece of me, not the newspapers, not the boys in fatigues, not even my father. . .

[She kisses him.]

ACHILLES

You kiss without shame.

IPHIGENIA

Will you betray me?

ACHILLES

Forgive me for I am cruel. I wanted you to bleed.

IPHIGENIA

I surrender willingly. It's what I've been taught to do.

ACHILLES

Will you forgive me?

IPHIGENIA

Give me your hands.

ACHILLES

What?

IPHIGENIA

You have bewitched me.

[Sun burns upon ACHILLES and IPHIGENIA as he gives her his hands. Immediate darkness.]

end of Part Two

Act 3, Scene 1

Part Three IPHIGENIA'S RETURN: SEVEN CUTS FROM A DREAM one

[In the city's gleam, IPHIGENIA is standing.]

IPHIGENIA

Back arched. The neck pivots on tired shoulders. Iphigenia comes home from the dance. The streets are empty. Dots of houses lie low against the horizon. Iphigenia is headed home, but she takes her time. She walks with the last trace of Achilles on her skin. Her father is far from her mind.

[VIOLETA appears. There is a dress over her arm.]

VIOLETA IMPERIAL

You're going to need your strength.

IPHIGENIA

Get away from me.

VIOLETA IMPERIAL

You've a temper in the morning, eh? Come on. Try on this dress. I made it special with lace. You want to look good for Achilles, don't you, child?

IPHIGENIA

For Achilles? Yes.

[IPHIGENIA lets VIOLETA place the dress on her.]

VIOLETA IMPERIAL

I made you this dress, Iphigenia. From Queen Anne's lace. These hands sewed night and day Praying for your return, while another pink cross, another girl's name went up on the factory wall.

IPHIGENIA

Another girl was killed?

VIOLETA IMPERIAL

Where do you think I got the Queen Anne's lace?

IPHIGENIA

Take this off me.

VIOLETA IMPERIAL

It's all right, child. I washed it. This dress has been cleansed of all blood. You are safe.

IPHIGENIA

Hold me, Violeta. I'm scared.

VIOLETA IMPERIAL

I can't have anyone near me. You know that.

IPHIGENIA

No one will see.

VIOLETA IMPERIAL

You think because you're out here that no one can see?

IPHIGENIA

Hold me. Please. I can feel the dead girl's breath inside this dress. I feel all the dead through me.

VIOLETA IMPERIAL

Girls die every day here, and no one mourns them.

IPHIGENIA

I want to mourn them, Violeta. I want to free them of their pain. I want your scars on me.

VIOLETA IMPERIAL

Look around you, Iphigenia. There are eyes everywhere. They've seen everything. Your death will help us make some sense of it all. Our grief will finally have a place.

IPHIGENIA

I'm not dead.

VIOLETA IMPERIAL

They're selling pictures on the street.

[The screen flashes a thousand photos of IPHIGENIA's body splayed on the field outside the club. In each photo, her eyes are either ecstatically blank, or scratched out.]

We need someone to mourn for, Iphigenia. We need a girl we can look up to.

[The screen rests on a close shot of IPHIGENIA with the pacifier in her mouth.]

This one's my favorite. Fifty dollars for a premium shot of Iphigenia sucking on her baby blue. Of course, I wouldn't sell it. I sell chicken. Legs and wings. For running, and flying, see?

[The close shot of IPHIGENIA with blank eyes is magnified now. Image upon image. Eyes, mouth, nose. Cropped shots overlaid as VIOLETA fades into the periphery.]

IPHIGENIA

The dress of a dead girl sticks to her skin. Iphigenia sees her father's eyes staring at her from behind the screen. The centuries fade in ribbons. Father. . .

[SOLDIER X, a mercenary, appears.]

SOLDIER X

Give us back your body, girl. It's never been yours to keep.

IPHIGENIA

She closes her eyes against the sky as it turns to day. Away from her dreams. Away.

Act 3, Scene 2

two

[SOLDIER X and IPHIGENIA stand a few feet apart from each other.]

SOLDIER X

I was a boy once, Iphigenia. A child. I fed on my mother's tit. I mewled like anyone else. Once I cut my knee and had seven stitches put in. Everyone laughed at the poor boy with the busted knee as I cried and screamed, surprised at the sight of my own blood. I didn't understand what a body was then. You see? I was a boy. I understood animals — frogs, cows, birds but not human bodies. Everyone laughed as I held my tears in the rims of my eyes. I understood tears, but I didn't understand how to carry scars proudly.

IPHIGENIA

When will you kill me?

SOLDIER X

I'm a mercenary. I kill for money, not out of rage.

IPHIGENIA

Has my father paid you yet?

SOLDIER X

Let's not discuss such things.

IPHIGENIA

Make my father pay you. I want you to lead me into a quiet house off the main road, and tell me Achilles is waiting for me. I want you to close the door, and cover my eyes and when I ask "Why?" I want you to pierce me with a knife.

SOLDIER X

You're growing up too fast, girl.

IPHIGENIA

I never liked childhood.

Act 3, Scene 2

two

[SOLDIER X and IPHIGENIA stand a few feet apart from each other.]

SOLDIER X

I was a boy once, Iphigenia. A child. I fed on my mother's tit. I mewled like anyone else. Once I cut my knee and had seven stitches put in. Everyone laughed at the poor boy with the busted knee as I cried and screamed, surprised at the sight of my own blood. I didn't understand what a body was then. You see? I was a boy. I understood animals — frogs, cows, birds but not human bodies. Everyone laughed as I held my tears in the rims of my eyes. I understood tears, but I didn't understand how to carry scars proudly.

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SOLDIER X

You're growing up too fast, girl.

IPHIGENIA

I never liked childhood.

Act 3, Scene 3

three

[IPHIGENIA talks to ORESTES, who is inside the designer shoebox. ORESTES' face is seen on the screen.]

IPHIGENIA

I don't think you will ever grow up. You haven't grown an inch since I put you in here. You're so thin, and your fingers are so. . . I could break them. Snap. No one would notice. Your eyes are spinning, Orestes. Stop looking at me.

[IPHIGENIA rocks the box. ORESTES' face contorts in restless, wide-eyed sleep on the screen. She sings.]

"Lullaby for Orestes"

Marry the winged messenger with a foot on the grave.

Here we do what my father says.

The *fresa* girls work in factories all day

Waiting for young men to kill them.

Dream, dream, Orestes.

Dream, dream, with blood on your mind.

Dream, dream, Orestes.

Dream my death

With your stoned eyes.

Act 3, Scene 4

four

[CAMILA is combing her hair. IPHIGENIA watches her.]

CAMILA

Iphigenia's the eldest. My first. I'm supposed to be proud of her. But when I look at her, I feel hatred. Inexplicable, for it was an easy childbirth I had with her. Her brother, on the other hand, was hard. They had to cut me open. But Iphigenia popped out in minutes, eager to be out in the world. She burns my fingers. She is the fruit of Adolfo's rape of me. Such glorious, poisonous fruit. He married me against my will. He smashed the head of a baby boy whose name is no longer remembered And stuck his cock inside me. For the good of the country. For the promise of a model wife at his side. "My dear, sweet Iphigenia," Adolfo would say. "She is the best of us." I slap her. Across the face. I make her take care of her baby brother, because I know he cries all night, and she won't be able to sleep. I know what she wants. She wants to touch me. Like any daughter. Iphigenia. I will never love you.

Act 3, Scene 5

five

[IPHIGENIA walks like a ghost through her own house, and out into the street, toward the light of the hangar, past everything.]

IPHIGENIA

It is night. I see fragments. My mother braids her hair in the moonlight. My brother cries from inside the box that once held my Gucci shoes. My father sleeps with his feet facing the window. I kiss him for the last time. No tears, father. Everything will be all right. I move to the whispers of soldiers in neon out on the street, outside the house that holds me. The *fresa girls* leave the factories with their party dresses on. Hey, girls. Let's go dancing. Pulse I go in the mirrorball. Pulse. . . Spin, spin a drop of magenta green in the open sky. Give me a kiss, fair Achilles, give me a deep, wet dizzy with E. . . I am caught in my father's eyes. They stare out of every camera.

[IPHIGENIA motions to SOLDIER X, who appears out of the shadows.]

Lead me now, soldier. Be my blissful mercenary.

[IPHIGENIA offers SOLDIER X her arm.]

This is how I want to be remembered: With a tab of E on my tongue, the rush of love in my heart, And the whole world spinning with my glory. Pulse. Pulse. I go.

[SOLDIER X takes her in a shiver of electric light. Immediate darkness. Silence.]

Act 3, Scene 6**six**

[The FRESA GIRLS at the club are on the TV screen.]

FRESA GIRL 1

Yeah, I saw her. She had a Chanel on. I wanted to strip that label off her dress, and sew it onto mine. I sew good, you know. A hundred dollars a week in the factory. I came here from the country. You think I look good? I've been thinking about plastic surgery.

FRESA GIRL 2

Everybody was dancing. I couldn't see anything. Hey. Hey. Do you like Prodigy?

FRESA GIRL 1

She was looking for Achilles. She had on the best clothes. I could watch her for hours. I bet I could make myself into her. With the right smile, the right teeth. . . I could be Iphigenia.

FRESA GIRL 3

Hey. Hey. Don't you want to talk to me? I saw everything. Yeah. Soldier X, the mercenary, came in through the back of the club. She waved to him. What? She was no saint. I saw her. You hear me? I saw him kill her. I saw everything. Like I had the eyes of God. Hey. What are you-?

[Sound and image out on the TV. NEWS ANCHOR's face fills the screen. He is "off-camera.]"

NEWS ANCHOR

No, Walter. I do not know where the Knicks are playing tonight. Can't you goddamn look it up? I mean, this is the information age, for God's sake. Everything's at the touch of a . . . What? What? Oh.

[He is "on the air.]"

In late news tonight, the general's daughter Iphigenia is said to be dead. I repeat, "this is a rumor," But sources tell us she was seen outside an aircraft hangar shortly before midnight escorted by a man yet to be identified, and she has not been seen since. Unlike other incidents involving the general's daughter, reports lead us to believe this is not a kidnapping. Blood has been seen on the ground at a short distance from the hangar in a house made of cinder block. And experts confirm it does match Iphigenia's blood type. I repeat "This is a rumor. This is a rumor. This is a rumor."

[NEWS ANCHOR fades as ADOLFO is seen, live. He wears pajamas.]

ADOLFO

She was very still. I made the sign of the cross with my hands. The man took out the knife. My daughter's cry was heard but once. When I lifted my eyes, she was gone. There was blood everywhere. But no sign of my Iphigenia.

[In the background, ADOLFO is seen on video, dressed in a military coat. He speaks to the nation.]

[on video]

God took her. I believe God's will has been done. We must pray that all the fighting will stop. We must remember Iphigenia, and everything she did for us. As your leader, I will do my best, in this time of great sorrow for our family, To live up to her precious memory. Iphigenia is a saint.

[live]

I will be re-elected. No one will throw a father who has just lost his daughter out of office.

[CAMILA appears, live.]

CAMILA

A saint?

ADOLFO

Listen, Camila. The people are praying. She escaped death. She'll save us all.

[on video]

In Iphigenia's name. I call for our nation to be united.

CAMILA

My dear Iphigenia, where have the gods taken you? Where are you, Iphigenia?

[ADOLFO embraces CAMILA. The sound of baby ORESTES crying in the background. Fade on the scene. The VIRTUAL MC comes up on the screen, disembodied, and grinning in the light.]

VIRTUAL M.C.

Well, my little sluts, it looks like our dancing daughter has taken flight. Angels bring her rest while we change places on a wooden bench and take our crystal high. If it's not one brutality, it's another, and the way we count the days is by the pulse of this light. Skip on, crashers, shine for all eternity with your Paul Smith trousers and Miu Miu shoes. This is an alcohol-free night. Do you hear me? No tequila, no martinis, no retro hangovers. But we got lollipops for those tired tongues and buzzing teeth to last us through the next hundred tomorrows that Louis Prima won't let us live down in the swing of the mood of the many thousand things that strikes his chord. You get me, dolls? This is about pig tails and ankle socks and setting yourself up for burying your heads between your knees. There is no tomorrow, children. There is only the night. And we're going to live it through for eternity.

[The VIRTUAL MC's grin escapes the image of ACHILLES, live, who nevertheless seems to be ghosting a corner of the ever expanding space. He sings.]

"My eyes to your eyes"

ACHILLES

Insomnia trace my skin to you. My eyes to your eyes, My eyes to your eyes. Save the hour, sweet angel, And I will follow. Hold your breath, dear angel And I will follow. I will follow. Peel off my scab, restart the wound I will follow. I will follow. . .

[Image projected on the screen: close-up of IPHIGENIA's face through a surveillance camera. Pulsing darkness.]

Act 3, Scene 7

Seven IPHIGENIA IN EXTASIS

[A view from the camera. IPHIGENIA remains. She is both live, and on the screen.]

IPHIGENIA

Crash. I am not cut, but I am bleeding. There is black sand on my feet, but no water. Only the sound of waves rushing. I am standing. I have wings. They grow out of my shoulder blades Out of the veil of the TV screen. I am not cut, but I am bleeding. Crash. I remember falling, Kissing Through the garden, To the neon lights on the street, Splitting me into threads of skin. Wings lift me. I am moving. I am at the edge of the city. I am atop the aircraft hangar and its beams of green. Boys, girls and a million vacant eyes. Look at me. I stand on the metal ledge. Black liquid sand slipping off my skin. The story has been told again. A wreath has been placed upon Iphigenia's head. Crash. Every part of me is breaking. But I'm all right. Give me your hands. Give me your hands, Cause you're wonderful.

(END OF PLAY.)

Act 3, Scene 7

Seven IPHIGENIA IN EXTASIS

[A view from the camera. IPHIGENIA remains. She is both live, and on the screen.]

IPHIGENIA

Crash. I am not cut, but I am bleeding. There is black sand on my feet, but no water. Only the sound of waves

rushing. I am standing. I have wings. They grow out of my shoulder blades Out of the veil of the TV screen. I am not cut, but I am bleeding. Crash. I remember falling, Kissing Through the garden, To the neon lights on the street, Splitting me into threads of skin. Wings lift me. I am moving. I am at the edge of the city. I am atop the aircraft hangar and its beams of green. Boys, girls and a million vacant eyes. Look at me. I stand on the metal ledge. Black liquid sand slipping off my skin. The story has been told again. A wreath has been placed upon Iphigenia's head. Crash. Every part of me is breaking. But I'm all right. Give me your hands. Give me your hands, Cause you're wonderful.

(END OF PLAY.)